

# BJRC Sailing Instructions 2026

## 1 AUTHORITY

### 1.1 RULES AND DOCUMENTS

BJRC racing is governed by The Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) 2025 - 2028, the RYA Prescriptions, the Notice of Race (The Race Card), and these Sailing Instructions (SIs).

### 1.2 RACING RULES OF SAILING

The following Rules have been changed or added to in these SIs. All others apply as written.

RRS 1.2	Life-Saving Equipment and Personal Flotation Devices (SIs 3.3, 3.4)
4	Decision to race (SI 4.1)
26	Starting Sequence (SI 6.1.5)
27.1	Course Notification (SI 6.1.3)
27.3	Postponement (SI 6.1.4)
29.1, 29.2	Recalls (SI 6.1.7)
32.2 (a)	Shortening course (SI 6.2.4)
33	Changing the next leg of the course (SI 6.2.5)
34	Mark missing (SI 6.2.6)
61.1(a)	Protest flag (SI 5.7)
90.2 (c)	Changes to Sailing Instructions (SI 1.4)

### 1.3 NOTICE OF RACE

The Notice of Race consists of the Race Card, giving the schedule of races, dates, start times and start and finish lines, and the Standard Courses and race marks to be used for that season.

### 1.4 AUXILIARY AND AMENDED SAILING INSTRUCTIONS

During the season, any additions or amendments to the SIs or the Race Card will be communicated either:

- By notifying all registered boat owners in the week before a race, or
- By a general transmission on Channel 77 to all yachts entered, at least 15 minutes before the start of the race to which the amendment refers. Amendment may include setting of a non-standard course. (Change to RRS 90.2 (c))

## 2 HANDICAPS

### 2.1 BJRC LOCAL HANDICAP SYSTEM

The BJRC Handicap system is an individual performance-based system, using the Portsmouth Number (PN) notation. Penalty points are applied to the leading five boats after each race to maintain competitiveness.

### 2.2 STARTING HANDICAPS

BJRC starting handicaps will be developed by the handicap committee and be based on the past performance of a specific boat or the likely future performance, to ensure.

competitive racing by well sailed boats. Boats must have been given a BJRC Handicap to be eligible to race.

During the season the committee may take any action it considers necessary to promote fair and competitive racing. (Now in 2.5)

### **2.3 CHANGES AFFECTING PERFORMANCE**

Changes that may affect the performance of a boat should be stated on the new season's Registration Form or any changes made during the season must be notified to the BJRC Chairman at least seven days before the next race the boat enters, and may result in an amendment of the boat's handicap.

The Portsmouth Numbers (PNs) used for calculating each finishing boat's Corrected Time for a race will be those notified to registered owners before the race (Deleted)

### **2.4 BJRC POINTS PENALTIES TO LEADING BOATS**

After each series race the leading five boats will have penalties applied to their handicaps as follows:

Winner 20 points, 2nd 16 points, 3rd 12 points, 4th 8 points, 5th 4 points.

In the event of a tie on corrected time the penalties will be divided in the same manner as the race scores. (RRS Appendix A7) (Added)

### **2.5 Adjustments During the Season**

During the season the committee may take any action it considers necessary to promote fair and competitive racing. The committee will consider the handicaps of boats when their "over-performance", as measured by Halsail, exceeds four percent and the boat is at least one percent ahead of the following boat. An additional 10-point penalty can be applied unless there were special circumstances which lead to the "over-performance". The Committee is to be cautious as extreme weather can lead to odd results.

### **2.6 (renumbered) IRC/YTC RATED BOATS**

Results for each race, and for the series, will also be generated using the time correction factor on a boat's current IRC certificate. IRC certificates must be in the hands of the Chairman at least seven days before the first race entered.

## **3 ELIGIBILITY FOR RACES AND SERIES**

### **3.1 RACE ENTRY**

Entry to the races and series is open to any eligible cruising that meets the following conditions:

1. Boat owned by or chartered to a member of an RYA affiliated club situated on the Blackwater Estuary
2. Has submitted a registration form and with a signed safety declaration.
3. Paid the appropriate fee.

### **3.2 ELIGIBLE BOATS**

An eligible boat is one which, in the opinion of the Committee, is a genuine cruising yacht, and is designed, equipped with a permanent cabin, with at least two fixed berths or pipe cots of full length. The cockpit shall be separated from the cabin by a permanent bulkhead with doors or a solid closure.

### **3.3 SAFETY EQUIPMENT ON BOARD**

A competing boat shall carry safety equipment in accordance with the schedule Appendix A attached. All listed equipment to be maintained in a correct state,

accessible for immediate use, and all crew to be instructed in its location and use.  
(Change to RRS 1.2)

### **3.4 PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES**

Lifejackets complying with BS EN 396 150N and as described in Appendix A shall be on board for each crew member, and it is the responsibility of the owner or person in charge to require that they be worn when conditions warrant. (Change to RRS 1.2)

### **3.5 INSURANCE**

A boat must be covered by adequate and suitable Insurance, including Third Party liability to the value of at least £5m per event or the equivalent.

## **4 CONDITIONS OF ENTRY TO A RACE**

### **4.1 SAFETY - GENERAL**

The responsibility for a boat's decision to race or continue racing is hers alone. (RRS 4)

The safety of a boat is the sole responsibility of the owner or person in charge, who must decide whether the boat and crew are fit to sail in the conditions which may arise during the race. By participating in a race, they confirm that they are fit for those conditions and competent to sail and compete in them.

Nothing done or published by the organisers, whether in the Notice of Race, the Sailing Instructions, or anywhere else, reduces this responsibility, nor will it make the organisers responsible for any loss, damage, death, or personal injury, however it may have occurred, as a result of the boat taking part in the racing. (Addition to RRS 4)

### **4.3 BOAT IDENTIFICATION**

#### **4.3.1 SAIL NUMBERS**

A boat entering a race shall carry, before the start and throughout the race, easily identifiable BJRC registered sail numbers, to be visible from either side of the boat.

#### **4.3.2 CODE FLAG 5**

In addition, a boat shall fly from her backstay or otherwise at the stern, International Code flag Numeral Pennant No 5 of a minimum length of 400mm.

### **4.4 RACE REGISTRATION**

A boat entering a race shall, at least 15 minutes before the start, contact the Race Officer on VHF Channel 77, to register her intention to race, to confirm her identification numbers, and to report the number of persons on board for the race. She shall continue to monitor Channel 77 throughout the race (SI 5.2).

### **4.5 LIMITATIONS ON USE OF ENGINE**

#### **4.5.1 PREPARATORY PERIOD**

A boat is racing from her Preparatory signal, (5 minute, change to RRS 26), and may not use her engine during this period, or thereafter, until she finishes or retires, or until the RO signals a General Recall, Postponement, or Abandonment, except as provided in 4.5.2, 4.5.3, and 4.5.4.

#### **4.5.2 LATE STARTERS**

A boat arriving late at the start using her engine may start, provided that she starts no sooner than 5 minutes after the start signal, and provided that she executes a 360-degree turn under sail on the prestart side of the line immediately before starting. If she arrives from the course side of the line, she shall pass outside the start line limits ('Round the ends') and keep clear of all boats racing. (RRS 22.1, 42.3 (i))

#### **4.5.3 BOATS KEDGED AND UNABLE TO START**

A boat kedged on the course side of the line and unable to sail back to start correctly may start by motoring back to the prestart side of the line, provided that she starts no sooner than 5 minutes after the start signal, and provided that she executes a 360 degree turn under sail on the prestart side of the line immediately before starting. (RRS 42.3 (i))

#### **4.5.4 AVOIDING OR RECOVERING FROM A HAZARDOUS SITUATION, OR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE**

A boat may use her engine to avoid or recover from a hazardous situation, or provide assistance to any boat or person, and continue racing thereafter, providing the person in charge gives full details to the RO immediately after finishing. The Chairman may require further detail at a later time. (RRS 42.3 (i))

Grounding in non-hazardous situations is not covered by this Rule - see SI 5.9.

### **5 OBLIGATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS DURING A RACE**

#### **5.1 RULE COMPLIANCE**

By participating in a race under these racing Rules, each competitor and boat owner agrees:

- (a) To be governed by the Rules.
- (b) To accept the penalties imposed and other action taken in accordance with these rules, subject to the appeal and review procedure provided in them, as the final determination of any matter arising under the Rules, and
- (c) With respect to such determination, not to resort to any court of law or tribunal (RRS 3)

#### **5.2 VHF RADIO WATCH**

Every boat in the race shall maintain a radio watch on VHF Channel 77 throughout the race, for the purposes of safety and mutual support, to receive messages from the Race Officer, and if necessary to assist the RO (SIs 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5). If so requested, she shall acknowledge radio communications from the RO promptly, if necessary via a boat acting as a relay station.

#### **5.3 RETIREMENT DURING A RACE**

If a boat wishes to retire from the race for any reason, she shall inform the Race Officer promptly on Channel 77, giving reasons if pertinent to the conduct of the race or compilation of the result.

#### **5.4 AREAS OF MOORINGS**

A boat shall not sail through the moorings off Marconi and Stone sailing clubs while racing. A boat who drifts into this area through an error of judgement may exonerate herself by taking a two-turn penalty as soon as practicable afterwards, and before the next mark of the course.

As a courtesy, boats should also avoid entering these areas during any pre-race maneuvering, except to pick up a vacant mooring while waiting for the preparatory signal.

## **5.5 THIRSLET SPIT NAVIGATION MARK**

Thirslet Spit starboard hand navigation mark must be passed on the southward side at all times when racing.

## **5.6 PENALTIES**

If a boat incurs a Penalty for infringement of RRS Part A (When boats meet) or Rule 31 (Hitting a mark of the course) while racing she may exonerate herself by taking a two or one turn penalty in accordance with RRS 44.1, 44.2.

## **5.7 PROTESTS**

In the event of a Protest, a Protest flag need not be displayed (Change to RRS 61.1(a)). The Protestee should be hailed promptly, if possible, and the Race Officer should be informed immediately after finishing (SI 6.3.3). The hail may be made on VHF Channel 77 to give the opportunity for the protested boat to take remedial action, for example to return to a missed mark, or to exonerate herself under SI 5.6.

Completed Protest forms shall be lodged with the sponsoring club within 24 hours of finishing the race, or otherwise by agreement with the RO, or the Sailing Secretary of the sponsoring club, whose duty it is to deal with the Protest.

### **5.7.1 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE PROCEDURE**

The Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration of the RYA Rules Disputes Procedure will be available. This sets out three types of hearing for resolving Rules disputes:

- 1      Advisory hearing not involving a Protest.
- 2      Arbitration; a pre-Protest hearing.
- 3      A full Protest.

For more information see: <http://www.rya.org.uk/racing/racing-rules/Pages/rules-disputes-process.aspx>

## **5.8 WEST MERSEA YACHT CLUB RACE MARKS**

BJRC Races use Marks laid by WMYC. If a boat in a BJRC race finds, on approaching a WMYC Mark, that it is being rounded by West Mersea racing fleets at about the same time, BJRC race boats shall, as a matter of courtesy, keep clear of the West Mersea boats while maneuvering in close proximity.

## **5.9 MATTERS ADVERSELY AFFECTING PERFORMANCE**

Any incident such as grounding, accidents to sails, or a gross error of navigation, which would lead to an untypically poor finish time, shall be reported to the RO. This information may assist the Handicap Subcommittee in any review of a boat's handicap or performance.

## **5.10 REPORTING TO THE RO**

If the boat leading the race finds that a Mark of the course is missing, or if any boat racing observes any significant occurrence or weather change that could affect the fairness of the race, she shall report this to the RO promptly on VHF Channel 77, and thereafter assist the RO as necessary in resolving the situation in a fair manner. Any boat hearing transmissions of this nature should record her position and the time when first heard in order to substantiate any grounds for redress which may occur.

## **5.11 FINISHING WHEN THE COMMITTEE BOAT OR RO IS NOT PRESENT**

If on reaching the finish line a boat finds no Committee boat present, or suspects that the Race Officer may not be present in the Race Bridge ashore, she shall take her own finishing time, correctly calibrated from the start time, from the fixed line at Marconi or Stone, or when the remaining fixed mark of the finishing line bears due north. This time to be reported to the sponsoring club and the BJRC Chairman not later than the Monday following the race.

# **6 RACE PROCEDURE**

## **6.1 AT THE START**

### **6.1.1 START LINES (See also SI 6.3.1 'Finish lines')**

The RO can change the start location to suit the conditions. The standard start lines for series races are as follows:

**a) Osea Pier**

A line drawn between the light on the seaward end of Osea pier and the mast of the Committee Boat. The Race Officer may lay a protective Inner Distance Mark

**b) Marconi Sailing Club**

A line extending across the river from the red triangle above the Marconi SC Race Box and the pole also carrying a red triangle on the foreshore. Boats must start to the South of the Outer Limit Mark, yellow can.

**c) Stone Sailing Club**

A line extending across the river from the flagstaff on the club Bridge through the apex of the triangular mark on the foreshore. Boats must start between the yellow limit marks, inshore mark 'A' and offshore Mark '5'.

**d) Thirslet**

A line drawn between Thirslet Spit Navigation Channel Mark and the mast of the Committee Boat. The Race Officer may lay protective Distance Marks at either or both ends of the line.

### **6.1.2 COURSE TO BE SAILED**

The Race Officer will indicate the Course to be sailed in a general transmission on Channel 77 at least fifteen minutes before the start. The course will normally be selected from the Standard Courses, consisting of three parts indicated by Letter-Numeral-Letter, set out on the Course Card, and forming part of these Instructions. However, in exceptional circumstances, generally very strong or very light winds forecast, the RO may set any other course he or she feels appropriate. (Change to RRS 27.1)

### **6.1.3 POSTPONEMENT**

In addition to the standard signals (RRS 27.3) the Race Officer will make a general transmission on Channel 77 giving an indication of the delay envisaged. However, the signals will prevail in the event. (Addition to RRS 27.3)

### **6.1.4 STARTING SIGNALS (GENERAL)**

The Starting Sequence will be as follows, except for races starting at the Marconi line:

Class Warning	10 minutes before the start International Code flag 'Numeral 5' with one sound signal
Preparatory	5 minutes before the start. International Code flag 'P' with one sound signal. (Change to RRS 26)
RRS 26)	

The RO may choose to use a sound signal and Channel 77 radio communications to supplement the prevailing visual flag signals.

#### **6.1.4 STARTING SIGNALS (MARCONI LINE)**

Races will be started with the following signals. Times shall be taken from the visual signals. The absence of a sound signal shall be disregarded.

Class warning signal	5 minutes before the start	One red light	One sound
Preparatory signal	4 minutes before the start	2 red lights	One sound
Penalty period signal	1 minute before the start	3 red lights	One sound
Start signal		All lights out	One sound

The RO may choose to use a sound signal and Channel 77 radio communications to supplement the prevailing visual light signals.

#### **6.1.5 RACE TO BE VALID**

Two or more boats must cross the start line in accordance with the rules within two hours of the starting signal for the race to be valid. If this is not the case the Race Officer will signal an Abandonment, and the race may be re-sailed on another occasion or cancelled.

#### **6.1.6 RECALLS**

Individual and General Recalls will be made in accordance with RRS 29.1 or 29.2. or in addition, the Race Officer may make a general transmission on Channel 77 indicating the boat or boats required to return and restart. (Addition to RRS 29.1, 29.2)

At the Marconi line the recall signals will be:

Individual Recall	One white light	One sound signal
General Recall	Single orange flashing light	One sound signal

### **6.2 DURING THE RACE**

#### **6.2.1 ACTIONS BY THE RO DURING A RACE**

Any radio communications to or from the RO, or between boats racing, will be treated as information available to all boats (RRS 41 (c)), and will not constitute grounds for redress.

#### **6.2.2 TIME LIMIT**

One boat must finish within eight hours of the start time for the race to be valid. The Race Officer may obtain information from leading boats and shorten or change the course to ensure a result.

#### **6.2.3 SHORTENING COURSE - FINISHING AT A MARK OF THE COURSE**

The Race Officer afloat may shorten the course by moving the Committee Boat to a position adjacent to any of the Marks of the course which has been set. He or she will also make a general transmission on Channel 77 indicating the shortening. The Committee Boat will fly Code Flag 'S' and boats will finish between the Mark and the mast of the Committee boat. Two sound signals will be made as the leading boat approaches the Mark.

For races using fixed lines ashore, and with no Committee Boat available, the RO will make whatever arrangements he or she thinks appropriate, and will follow the procedure of Channel 77 transmission and acknowledgement as in SI 6.2.4 below. (Addition to (RRS 32.2 (a))

#### **6.2.4 ALTERING THE COURSE AFTER THE START**

The Race Officer may change the course after the start, usually by omitting one or more Marks. The change will be indicated in a transmission on Channel 77 and must be acknowledged by all boats racing. If the RO fails to receive acknowledgement from a boat which is out of range, he or she will request the relay boat to obtain acknowledgement from any boats that have not acknowledged the change of course. (Change to RRS 33)

Should a competing boat not return acknowledgment after reasonable attempts are made by a relay boat to communicate via VHF, it will be assumed that the non-responsive boat is in contravention of RR 5.2 VHF watch, which could at the RO's discretion lead to disqualification from the race if the altered course is not sailed. (clarification)

#### **6.2.5 MARK MISSING**

If the Race Officer receives a report of a mark of the course missing (SI 5.10) he or she will make whatever arrangements they consider appropriate, and will make a general transmission on Channel 77 indicating what is to be done, and requesting acknowledgement from all boats as in SI 6.2.4. (Change to RRS 34)

Should a competing boat not return acknowledgment after reasonable attempts are made by a relay boat to communicate via VHF, it will be assumed that the non-responsive boat is in contravention of RR 5.2 VHF watch, which could at the RO's discretion lead to disqualification from the race if the altered course is not sailed. (clarification)

### **6.3 AT THE FINISH**

#### **6.3.1 FINISH LINES**

These will be the same Marks and alignments as the Start lines (SI 6.1.1). If possible, the Race Officer afloat will position the Committee Boat due south of the corresponding fixed mark, to be consistent with any late finishing boats recording their own finish times (SI 5.11).

#### **6.3.2 RACE OFFICER AND COMMITTEE BOAT**

The Race Officer or Committee Boat will be on station to take the time of the first finisher and will remain on station for up to two hours after that to time the remaining finishers. If the RO then wishes to leave station, he or she will attempt to contact any 'tail-enders' on Channel 77 to ascertain their distance from the finish and advise them to record their own finishing time (SI 5.11).

The RO will attempt by all available means to account satisfactorily for all the boats which entered the race.

#### **6.3.3 PROTESTS**

The Race Officer will pass any oral notice of Protest to the Sailing Secretary of the Sponsoring Club, and to the BJRC Chairman. (SI 5.7)

## **7      RESULTS**

### **7.1    RACE SCORES**

Scores for each race will be in accordance with the Low Point system, RRS Appendix A9, for series longer than a Regatta. A boat that came to the start line, did not finish, retired, or was disqualified shall be scored points for the finishing place one more than

the number of boats that came to the starting area. Boats will score the number of racers in the series plus one when they do not compete.

## **8 TROPHIES**

### **8.1 RACE TROPHIES**

Trophies for each race, and for the series, will also be awarded to the both BJRC and RYA - YTC winners.

### **8.2 BJRC CHAMPION CRUISER TROPHY**

This trophy will be presented to the winner of the season's series. Scores for each boat will be the aggregate of their best five scores over the series. Series Score Ties will be broken in accordance with RRS Appendix A8.

A trophy will also be presented to the boat coming in second place.

### **8.3 BJRC TEAM RACE**

The Interclub Team Race is sailed concurrently with the Weather Mark Trophy Race. Scores for the Team Race will be the aggregate of the individual scores of the three best scoring boats from each Club. Ties will be broken in accordance with RRS Appendix A8.

### **8.4 BJRC RABBIT TROPHY**

This Trophy will be presented to the skipper who, in his or her first season as a competitor obtains the best score from the aggregate of three races.

### **8.5 BJRC CHALLENGE TROPHY**

This trophy will be presented by the BJRC Committee to any person or organisation for an outstanding performance or service during the racing season.

## **APPENDIX A - SAFETY EQUIPMENT TO BE CARRIED**

Safety equipment to be carried on board all yachts entering BJRC races, all to be securely fastened, accessible, serviced and suitable.

A competing boat shall carry safety equipment as detailed below:

Facilities for reducing main and headsail sizes by reefing or substitution

Anchor and chain or warp

Marine Compass

Manual bilge pump with secured handle

Echo sounder or lead line

Heaving line minimum 25m.

Fire Extinguisher

Charts and navigation equipment

Tools and spares

Torch with spare batteries and bulbs

First Aid kit

VHF radio capable of operating on Channel 77

Fog horn

Stout bucket, minimum 9 litres (2 gals.) with lanyard

Deck mounted lifebuoy and/or life sling, with reflective tape, marked with yacht's name  
Equipment suitable for cutting the yacht's standing rigging.

Flares - 2 red pinpoint and two orange smoke - in date

Lifejackets with whistles and reflective tape for all crew, marked with yacht or wearer's name.

A strong, sharp knife, sheathed and securely restrained shall be provided readily accessible from the deck or a cockpit.

All listed equipment to be maintained in a correct state, accessible for immediate use, and all crew to be instructed in its location and use.